



# **Attendance Policy**

**Last reviewed: January 2020**

**Next review: January 2023**

At Washingborough Academy we expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

Washingborough Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance<sup>1</sup>. The School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy has regard to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the Lincolnshire County Council "Non School Attendance Prosecution Policy".

### **AIMS:**

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Some pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership (possibly with external agencies) to resolve these.

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<sup>1</sup>Regular school attendance is defined by the school as full time, for 100% of the sessions when the school is open, unless a pupil is medically unfit to be at school or the headteacher has authorised an absence for exceptional purposes.

- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## **EXPECTATIONS:**

### **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### **We expect the following from parents:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- A quality education

## ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE

### Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session
- Newsletter updates
- Annual reports to parents
- Feedback at parents' evenings
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Attendance information on the school website for parents
- The efficient use of a computerised registration system.

### The Importance of Registration:

- An attendance register must be kept on which, at the **beginning** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.
- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

### Categorising Absence:

- **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can authorise absence**, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.
- Emerging patterns of absence must be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register using the appropriate code.

### Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

Parents and carers are asked to notify the school by phone, email or in person as soon as is practicable if their child needs to be absent from school.

**Authorised absence** is where the school either has given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**. The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available and which could not have been attended out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.
- Other exceptional circumstance as agreed with the head teacher.

Absences for other reasons, such as the examples below, will **not** be authorised:

- To care for other family members/ minding the house/looking after siblings
- Birthdays
- Shopping for school uniform
- Head lice
- Family holiday
- Weekend breaks
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems (unless LCC taxi transport has failed to collect pupils)
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- No reason given.

#### **Lateness:**

The school actively discourages late arrival by challenging parents/carers who persistently allow their child to arrive late, or late without reasonable explanation.

#### **NON-ATTENDANCE:**

- Children are expected to arrive at school for 8:50am to be ready to begin their lessons by 9:00am. Arriving at 9am means they will miss the start of learning. Parents must contact the school as soon as possible, ideally before 8.50 but at the latest by 9.15am if their child is absent. This can be by e-mail, in person or by telephone.

If a child arrives late at school they must report to the office. If the school has not heard from parents/carers by 9.15am we will make every effort to contact parents/carers by telephone, in order to ascertain the reason for absence.

- Where there is no response, there may be a visit from a member of the school staff, Early Help or social services (if they are already involved).
- The school promotes a holistic approach to supporting good attendance and works with the Early Help Service to provide support if necessary.

- Where attendance monitoring identifies specific patterns of absence, or attendance levels drop below 93%, for which there is no clear reason parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the child's class teacher (appendix 1). This will be followed by a period of monitoring with a clear expectation that attendance will be 100% unless medical evidence of illness is provided. If the absence pattern continues appendix 2 and 3 will be followed within a 8-week period.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with a view to a formal referral being made to the county attendance team, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and further action planned.
- Ultimately, parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if there is no improvement after the interventions detailed above. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Absences during term time**

Under the 2006 regulations, parents must apply to the head teacher if they wish their child to be absent during term time. Only the head teacher can approve any absences. - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days when referring to term time absence. The amendments make clear that **Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

All requests for leave during term time must be made in advance by email or in writing to the school office. If the absence is not authorised and the parent takes the child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may be passed on to the county attendance team, if necessary.

### **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **Reintegration:**

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support plan.

Designated staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme. All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible. Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate.

## **LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Working Together –Washingborough Academy will work together in partnership with the full range of support services.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the county attendance team. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The county attendance team, may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

**Other Agencies** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Early Help Worker
- Educational Psychologists.
- Additional Needs
- Social Services.
- Local police

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification, which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

First Letter

Our Ref: Level 1

DATE

PARENT/CARER  
ADDRESS

Dear XXXXXXXX

**FULL NAME OF PUPIL – CLASS - YEAR GROUP – ATTENDANCE FIGURE % Attendance**

I am writing to express my concern at XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX high levels of absence from school since the start of this academic year. XXX percentage attendance rate is currently less than 93%.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

If you, or XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX, have any concerns that are influencing her absence, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope that together we can move forward to improve her attendance.

Yours sincerely

XXX NAME OF CLASS TEACHER XXX  
**Class Teacher**

Second letter

DATE

PARENT/CARER  
ADDRESS

Dear XXXXXXXX

**FULL NAME OF PUPIL – CLASS - YEAR GROUP – ATTENDANCE FIGURE % Attendance**

I am writing to express my concern at XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX high levels of absence from school since the start of this academic year. XXX percentage attendance rate is currently less than 93% that was brought to your attention in our last letter dated XXXXXXXXXX; unfortunately, XXX attendance rate is still below the required number.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. However, our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential. As highlighted in our Attendance Policy (a copy can be found on our website), if improvements in attendance are not immediately forthcoming, we will make a formal referral to the county attendance team, and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be imposed.

I would therefore like to meet with you on XXXXXXXXXXXX at XXX to discuss how we can work together to improve XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX attendance. If you are unable to attend this meeting please contact me on 01522 801355 to arrange a more convenient time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

XXX NAME OF CLASS TEACHER XXX  
**Class Teacher**

Final letter

Our Ref: Level 3

DATE

PARENT/CARER  
ADDRESS

Dear XXXXXXXX

**FULL NAME OF PUPIL – CLASS - YEAR GROUP – ATTENDANCE FIGURE % Attendance**

I am writing to express my concern at XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX high levels of absence from school since the start of this academic year. XXX percentage attendance rate is currently less than 93% and unfortunately, this is the third letter that we have written to resolve this.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Unfortunately, since your meeting on XXX DATE XXX with XXX NAME OF CLASS TEACHER XXX, XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX attendance has not significantly improved. We feel that it is therefore appropriate to invite you in to attend a second meeting, which will include myself and XXX CLASS TEACHER on XXX DATE XXX at XXXpm.

We would like to remind you of our Attendance Policy (a copy can be located on our website) and how the school will be making a referral to the county attendance team, with the potential of a Fixed Penalty Notice being served, if immediate improvement is not made.

We sincerely hope that together we can move forward to improve XXX NAME OF CHILD XXX attendance.

Yours sincerely

Jason O'Rourke  
**Headteacher**